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The Educational Council

CHARLES H. FARNSWORTH, Chairman

The work of the Educational Council for the coming year is practically a continuation of a program laid out almost when the Council was first organized. So far, some eight or nine subjects have been more or less discussed. Three of them, however, were taken up seriously, and of those, two, a course of study for music supervisors, were completed sufficiently for Joseph meeting. The third, entitled "Definition of Attainments Specified in Aid Toward Defining Standards of Measurement for Use in Survey of Music Teaching," from its very nature could not be completed until the other two were well advanced.



The gist of this topic is told in the words "definition of standards of measurement." One aspect of this definition is naturally covered by the courses of study which were presented and adopted last year, namely: that aspect which refers to what, in the census of opinion of those entitled to judge, constitutes attainments for the various grades. Such a definition of standards is, after all, however, a question of the ideals and judgments of a few. To give them still further authority, we need some way of defining standards of measurement of what is actually being accomplished in schools where there are supervisors who are carrying on music teaching. Such a standard of measurement is free from all opinion, and is based upon actual facts of accomplishment as far as they can be gathered. Obviously, such standards are of value in the degree to which they cover schools the country over where serious work is being done. The larger the number of schools, the more authoritative is the standard of measurement.

Defining standards of measurement of this sort immediately brings up the eternal conflict in men's minds between form and spirit,—a conflict that presents itself not only in art but in many subjects, especially in religion and education. The essential things that determine the value of music teaching, for instance, are the love awakened and the knowledge and technique gained. The knowledge and technique we can measure, but love pertains to the world of spirit, and eludes us. We can only infer it from what is done. It escapes any form of measurement. We must admit this at the outset. But because we cannot measure this aspect, it does not necessarily follow that knowledge and technique ought not to be measured. With reasonable interpretation, they may in a degree be measures of a love that prompts their successful accomplishment.

But this is not all. Music is peculiarly difficult to measure. One of its most important aspects, voice quality, can only be judged by experts through individual observation of the pupil. This obviously puts it out of the class of definable standards of measurement under school conditions. A more important element for the teacher, one that combines both knowledge and technique, is the ability to read at sight. This again is extremely difficult of measurement under

school conditions, especially where the results of thousands of individual trials are to be tabulated. The ability to read, therefore, must be reached indirectly through the factors that are considered essential for its accomplishment. That there is a grave danger in such a procedure must be realized at once; for students often show capacity for knowledge and technique and yet do not succeed in their synthetic use in sight singing. The reverse also is true. In spite of these limitations, there is not a supervisor in the land who would not be glad to know where his schools stand on a scale established by the accomplishment of hundreds of schools that are giving approximately the same time and money.

The field is so large that some members of the Council feel that the investigation should be limited for the present to the discovery of what is actually being accomplished at the end of the sixth grade. This marks the culmination of the elementary grade work and the beginning of the junior high. It marks more or less a changing attitude of the pupil, and gives a long enough period so that supervisors carrying on their work with different methods may still have time to show results. Keeping these limitations and aims in mind, and the quantitative results to be attained, the planning of tests becomes a very difficult problem, requiring a great deal of expert knowledge along lines of testing for satisfactory results. The test should not be too long. Fortunately, two series of tests have already been worked out and are ready for application.

The first of these is by our President, Mr. Beach. It consists of over sixty questions covering very systematically the phases of music study open to such questioning, with a supplementary pamphlet with full descriptions and giving all the musical examples to be played. These tests follow the ordinary usage in teaching in this country, and make an excellent review of the pupils' knowledge and skill. The questions and explanations can be had complete for thirty-five cents by writing to the Bureau of Educational Measurements and Standards, Kansas State Normal School, Emporia, Kansas.

The second series of tests is much shorter, presented in two complementary forms A and B, designed so that, where musical examples are required, one form presents the question and the other form its answer. These questions are so designed that they can be easily answered by means of a stencil. The plan followed, however, does not seek to cover all the work of the grades systematically, but to take a cross section of musical ability at about the junior high school period. It follows more or less the plan of the ordinary intelligence tests. The questions are the result of preliminary tests of somewhere near three hundred cases taken under widely varying conditions. It can be had for twenty-five cents by writing to Glenn Gildersleeve, Experimental Junior High School, Rochester, New York.

As intimated earlier, the validity of such standards of measurement depends on the larger number of schools that have tried them out. It is therefore of the utmost importance that music supervisors should become acquainted with these examples of testing, and where possible to give them at least experimental trials, and report the results to the Educational Council. Not only this, but there must be available many other attempts made at measuring which the Council should know about. The chairman feels greatly obliged to the Editor of the *JOURNAL* for giving him this opportunity to present the problems before the Council to its readers; for he realizes how much will depend on their hearty coöperation for the ultimate success in defining standards of measurement in such a difficult subject, one so largely a matter of spirit, as music.